

WARE RIVER NEWS

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Hardwick gets 'daffy'

Resident plants over 10,000 roadside daffodils

By Paula Ouimette
Staff Writer

HARDWICK – With the arrival of spring, many residents of Hardwick noticed daffodils cropping up all over town, seemingly overnight. Bright splashes of green and yellow enhanced the town's already bucolic landscape.

This work has been the effort of Hardwick resident, Fred Debros, who to date has planted the flowers in an effort to beautify the roadways of his town. The 77-year-old retiree digs the bulbs from his own garden and has replanted them along Rte. 32A, Upper Church Street and at the World War I Memorial in Gilbertville. "We have planted about 10,000 daffodils and as many snowdrops with elbow grease and a crowbar, just to make springs prettier. The bulbs are all dug up from my own garden, so except for the calories, it was a free and voluntary endeavor," he said.

Please see **DAFFODILS**, page 5



This sign marks the location of newly planted daffodil plants in Gilbertville. After the leaves turn yellow, they can be cut back, and the bulb will be ready to bloom next spring.



Fred Debros takes a moment to pose with one of his donkeys, Donner.

STM, ATM to be held Monday, May 24

Budgets, water filtration plant to be considered

By Eileen Kennedy
Staff writer

WARE – On Monday, May 24, there will be a Special Town Meeting at 6:30 p.m., with the Annual Town Meeting to be opened at 7 p.m., in the Ware Junior Senior High School auditorium.

On April 24, the STM was originally to be held but a quorum wasn't present so it was rescheduled.

The main topic at the STM will be the proposed water filtration plant and how to pay for it.

The town's water supply is high in manganese and iron, which colors the water brown and black when it interacts with the chlorine in the system. The filtration plant would trap the majority of the particles in large filters, helping to provide clearer water. Tests have shown that the water is drinkable according to the state's water standards, officials have said, and the system's test results are on the Department of Public Work's webpages on the town's website. The new plant would be located at the Barnes Street Pumping Station

property.

Over a month ago, before the original STM date, Select Board members voted 5-0 to recommend voters appropriate \$13.3 million for the new water filtration plant, they were divided on other articles regarding how to pay for the plant.

They also voted 3-2 on recommending articles about the plant including creating a stabilization fund to pay for the project, accepting state law to allow the stabilization fund and dedicated money, and an article that would dedicate 100% of revenue raised from the town's local tax on retail marijuana to the filtration plant stabilization fund. Morrin and newly-elected SelectBoard member Caitlin McCarthy voted against recommending those three articles.

Morrin has said in the past that water users should pay for the filtration plant and McCarthy said that night she wasn't sure 100% of the marijuana taxes should go toward paying for the new plant.

The town will have to borrow the \$13.3 million, but how those debt payments will be paid remains to be seen. It could be funded entirely by increases in water rates or by higher rates and other methods such as using retail marijuana taxes or other general funds.

Please see **WARE ATM**, page 3

Juvenile involved in assault released, to wear GPS

By Paula Ouimette
Staff Writer

WARE – A dangerousness hearing was held last Thursday for a 15-year-old juvenile arrested in a violent assault on 26-year-old Shiloh Skerritt, which resulted in significant injury to his shoulder. The attack occurred on the afternoon of May 8 in Grenville Park.

The judge at Hadley Juvenile Court released the juvenile to his family, with conditions he wear a GPS monitoring device, and follow curfew except for medical appointments, school and meetings with his attorney. The juvenile is not

allowed to abuse anyone, have any contact with the victim, the victim's family, or witnesses. He must also attend school daily and cannot visit Grenville Park. Contact with the 11-year-old involved in the assault is also prohibited, as is the use of drugs and weapons.

Additional charges against the involved juveniles have been filed for an assault that occurred the day prior to the Saturday assault, which resulted in Skerritt's injury. Police Chief Shawn Crevier said that the Friday event is still under investigation and more juveniles will be charged for their involvement. Crevier said they have also

obtained video footage of the assault.

The basketball hoops at Grenville Park have been removed for a 30-day period and the town is in the process of installing security cameras.

The 15-year-old will be returning to court on June 16 for a pre-trial hearing.

Shiloh

Paul Skerritt said he and his son, Shiloh, are doing better than they were a week ago in some

Please see **ASSAULT**, page 5

Gibbs Crossing trailhead sees improvement

By Paula Ouimette
Staff Writer

WARE – A branch of the Mass Central Rail Trail, known as the Ware River Valley Rail Trail, covers almost two miles from Robbins Road to Gibbs Crossing between Walmart and Lowes. Thanks to a grant and donation, a .35 mile stretch from Gibbs Crossing to Westbrook Avenue, will see a major overhaul this summer. Taylor

Davis Landscape Co. will complete the improvements by Aug. 1.

The town of Ware received a \$38,500 MassTrails Grant from the Department of Conservation and Recreation to improve the drainage, slope and surface materials of the trail. "Initially the grant was submitted to stone dust the entire section from Gibbs Crossing to Robbins Road, but

Please see **GIBBS**, page 6



The Ware River Valley Rail Trail branch of the Mass Central Rail Trail will get an upgrade due to a state grant and a donation from the Edward and Barbara Urban Foundation.

Courtesy graphic

Committee signs letter against violence

By Eileen Kennedy
Staff writer

WARE – At its May 12 meeting, the School Committee unanimously voted to add their voices to a letter from community leaders decrying an attack on a autistic man in Grenville Park on May 8. School Superintendent Dr. Marlene DiLeo also added her name to the letter.

The attack was allegedly carried out by two juvenile boys, one 15 and the other 11. The 15-year-old has been charged in the attack and the Ware police filed a 51A report with the state Department of Families and Children regarding the two boys.

School Committee Chairman Christopher Desjardins said Town Manager Stuart Beckley had contacted him, asking if the School Committee wanted to

Please see **LETTER**, page 5



Hardwick Community Fair gets 'green light'

By Paula Ouimette
Staff Writer

HARDWICK – At their meeting Tuesday, May 18, the Board of Selectmen heard from Hardwick Community Fair President Fay Butler, who said fair officials received the "green light" from the Board of Health to hold the annual fair.

Butler said they will plan it as they have in years past, but will be prepared to adjust accordingly if a change in COVID-19 guidelines arises. Butler said they would like

to have a beer and wine garden again and he will start the process for that. SelectBoard Chair Kelly Kemp said she hopes they can all enjoy the fair this year.

Memorial Day

Don Martel said in lieu of a Memorial Day parade, they will visit each site in town and lay wreaths. Martel said Town Clerk Ryan J. Witkos will read the names and Taps will be played. They will begin in Wheelwright at 9:30 a.m., then

continue to Hardwick, followed by Gilbertville.

Kemp apologized or a miscommunication that occurred with a Facebook post about Memorial Day events. Martel said the American Legion in town is still very much active, they just sold their building due to the pandemic. He said they are currently looking for a new site to meet. He said many of their members are elderly and a parade is too much for them.

Please see **HARDWICK**, page 3



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Budget discussion continues between BOS and FinCom

By Paula Ouimette
Staff Writer

HARDWICK – The Board of Selectmen held a joint meeting with the Finance Committee to further discuss the Fiscal 2022 preliminary budget on Tuesday, May 18, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Gilbertville Public Library

Finance Committee Chair Cheryl Wolfe said she spoke with a trustee from the Gilbertville Public Library, and their expenses should be the same as the Paige Memorial Library, at \$24,847.90.

Building inspector

BOS Chair Kelly Kemp said she has an updated number for the building inspector. The town’s assessment for the regional building inspection services is \$17,785.71.

Dump monitoring

Lori Hoffman, who is covering some administrative duties for the town, said she spoke with Tex Sarabia about the cost of monitoring the old dump on Lower Road and adding it as a line item on the budget. The cost is \$11,000 a year and is a recurring expense. The dump monitoring was added under the Board of Health budget.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Raymond Walker said there was only one increase on his proposed budget: fire expenses due to the rising cost of oil. He said the rest of his budget is level funded.

Walker said in his budget he included a request for \$8,000 is to replace nonfunctional hydrants along Route 32. He said four or five will need to be replaced, and he hopes to take care of

Warren Public Library has museum passes to a variety of locations

WARREN – The Warren Public Library has generously received funding from the Warren Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, for the following museum passes for 2021: Ecotarium for up to two adults and two children at half price; MA State Parks Pass free parking

Also, Old Sturbridge Village for up to four visitors at half price; Springfield Museums, buy one full-price admission and get one half off; USS Constitution is free admission for up to nine visitors.

two more each year. They fixed one by the Whistle Stop, but the rest of them in that line heading to Ware have issues.

SelectBoard Vice Chair Julie Quink asked Walker if he needed a warrant article for the generator grant. Walker said he did, and also an article for a fire truck if it goes through. The cost of the fire truck is \$1 million, of which the USDA would cover 35%. The town would be responsible for 5%. Walker said he hopes the grant will cover the remaining amount needed.

Cemetery mowing

Finance Committee Sam Jakshtis asked if the board had reached out to the Highway Department yet about absorbing some of the responsibilities of the cemetery caretaker. Kemp said Highway Superintendent Marty Gryszowka is short-handed now and the mowing is too much for his department to take on. Kemp said Gryszowka agreed to cover the burials and monuments. They are currently waiting on mowing bids. Wolfe said they are lacking mowing equipment too.

Other financial items

Quink said they also have two accounting bills they have to deal with, totaling \$50,000. One of the bills is a fiscal 2020 bill and needs to be a warrant item. The other is a fiscal 2021 bill, which will have to be dealt with.

Julie Murkette, who oversees the website and Facebook for the town, said she has been charging \$75 a month for her services, which covers about 16 hours on average. With the pandemic, her hours have increased to about 20. Murkette said she is also proofreading zoning bylaws and doing the maps for the assessors too. Murkette said she sent an invoice (she sends two a year) in February and has not been paid yet.

Are You Old News?



Each week the Ware River News digs into its submitted photo archives and selects a people photo to publish. We need your help to help identify those pictured.

Email your answers by Monday at noon to ekennedy@turley.com.

Last week's photo included the leaders of the 1991 Ware Are CROP Walk are from left in the front row, The Rev. Beverly Prestwood-Taylor, Priscilla Fuller and Cheryl Powell; second row, Eunice Sinnamon, Pat Orzulak, Joan Bassford, Bebe St. George and Shirley Peck; third row, Mura Bacon-Erikon, Gerry Sinnamon, Carol Bergman, David Peck, Barry Sinclair, Reid Jeffrey and Erik Erikson.

If anyone recognizes folks in this week's photo, please sent the information, with your full name, to ekennedy@turley.com.



Live concerts resume at 'Stone Church'

GILBERTVILLE – Friends of the Stone Church will present two Sunday afternoon band concerts on the lawn: “Summer Swing” by Weir River Jazz, on Sunday, June 13 and “Swing into Summer” by the Weir River Concert Band, on Sunday, June 27. Both events are free, outdoors at the Stone Church, 283 Main Street (Rte. 32), Gilbertville from 2 to 4 p.m. The public is invited to bring lawn chairs or blankets. Refreshments will be available. The concerts will comply with public health guidelines in effect at the time of each concert.

Weir River Jazz, a 17-member offshoot of the Weir River Concert Band, is dedicated to the appreciation and performance of Big Band jazz and swing music and also performs more modern works. John Sacco, a Vietnam veteran and former public school music director, directs both groups, which rehearse weekly in their ‘new home’ at the Stone Church. Donna-Lee DePrille, a well-known vocalist from the Pioneer Valley, will perform with the jazz group on June 13.

Weir River Concert Band is a 30-plus member, multi-generational ensemble of flutes, clarinets, saxophones, trumpets, French horns, tubas and percussion. The ensemble plays music from movies, television favorites and traditional band music classics. It was formed in 2006, providing an opportunity for musicians of all ages from Ware and surrounding communities to bring people together through music.

Following the long pandemic shutdown, these free community concerts are the first in-person events at the Stone Church. “The concerts were conceived in a spirit of hope by the groups and are presented in a spirit of joy in bringing people together again,” said Judy Edington, FOSC president.

Friends of the Stone Church (FOSC) is a nonprofit, community organization. Its mission is to preserve and protect the Gilbertville Stone Church and to facilitate its use by and service to the regional community. The vision is to use this historic landmark as a place of cultural and community enrichment. Donations are gratefully accepted by check to FOSC, P.O. Box 347, Gilbertville, MA 01031 or through FriendsOfTheStoneChurch.org. This program is supported, in part, by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, through its Project Grants program.

Car wash for Quaboag sports, May 22

WARREN – The Quaboag Athletic Booster Club will hold a car wash fundraiser on May 22, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lizak’s Bus Depot, at 1301 Main St. The proceeds will be used for Quaboag Regional Middle High School sports teams.

Cars will be \$10 and trucks and SUVs will be charged \$15. It includes washing and drying of vehicles. There will QRMHS air fresheners for sale and tickets for raffle baskets.

Each Quabog sports team will be washing vehicles. Come support Quaboag teams and get a vehicle cleaned at the same time. The team that washes the most cars wins a pizza party.



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Ware’s Memorial Day ceremony, parade set for May 31

WARE – The town’s Memorial Day parade will step off from the American Legion on Maple Street on Monday, May 31, at 1 p.m., and continue to Veteran’s Park on Main Street for a brief ceremony. It is recommended that all health guidelines set by the state and the town of Ware be followed. Masks and social distancing are recommended, as well as the help of those who attend to make this a safe and successful event. All veterans are encouraged to march in the parade to honor the veterans who have gone before. The parade marshal this year is retired Major Francis “Butch” Moran and the speaker will be retired Sgt. Major Francis Bateman.



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High school boiler needs fixing or replacing

By Eileen Kennedy
Staff writer

WARE – At its May 12 meeting, the School Committee asked that Building and Grounds Director William Deschamps attend its next meeting to discuss a leaking boiler at Ware Junior Senior High School.

School Superintendent Dr. Marlene DiLeo said a mechanical engineer had come to look at it and said it would cost \$29,425 to determine what the problem is and how to fix it. “We have to determine the next steps for either repair or replacement,” she said.

By state law, every school must have two boilers, and at WJSHS, the process has begun to hook up the backup boiler to be the primary boiler for now, she said.

School Committee member Brian Winslow asked if the Massachusetts School Building Authority could be petitioned to fund the boiler’s replacement it that was necessary. DiLeo said the MSBA’s funding of two other recent projects, the boilers at the elementary school and the windows and doors at the middle school, she wasn’t sure if a grant would be forthcoming for this boiler. If the project was funded by the MSBA, it would cover 78% of the cost, with the town being responsible for the rest.

Deschamps, in putting together a list of the district’s physical plant needs had determined replacing the boiler was likely to cost \$1 million, DiLeo said.

School Committee Chairman Christopher Desjardins asked that Deschamps tell the committee what repairs have been made in the past and what the prospects are going forward.

Waiving fees

The School Committee approved a motion by member Brian Winslow to waive \$412.50 in COVID-19 cleaning fees related to the upcoming Special Town Meeting and Annual Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, May 24, in the WJSHS gymnasium.

Winslow said he thought it would be a gesture on the part of the committee as the district’s budget will be decided during the ATM. The committee usually waives their use fee for the town, but with COVID-19 safety procedures, it will now absorb the cleaning costs as well.

Winslow and Desjardins said they attended a recent Finance Committee meeting, where they learned that its members are working to reduce the number of town meetings held every year and have the town become more efficient.

HARDWICK FAIR from page 1

Building inspector fees

Kemp said she talked to the building inspector and he said their fee schedule is “antiquated.” He said he was willing to look at updating the fee schedule if the board approved. The current fee schedule was done in 2016. The board agreed the fee schedule should be updated.

HCA drafts

The board received revised Host Community Agreements from town counsel for Hardwick Mill Greenery and Budding Botanicals LLC. Kemp said town counsel felt removing the impact fee and just adding another payment, or benefit payment, in the same amount, would still be considered an impact fee in the court. Town counsel suggested in the drafts for each business to propose an impact fee and a benefit fee.

Kemp said Adroit Manufacturing owner, Ralph Rogers came to the board’s last meeting with his concerns about impact fees versus benefit payments, as well as the \$5,000 legal deposit and indemnification language. Rogers said he agreed to pay the legal deposit and have it taken off of his first impact fee. Rogers said in speaking with town counsel, the language in the HCA

regarding indemnification is there because marijuana is still illegal under federal laws. Rogers said he wants the language about marijuana being illegal according to federal regulations included.

Kemp said they will talk with town counsel tomorrow to make amendments to Rogers’ HCA in order for the board to review it and vote at their next meeting.

EMS update

Quink said she received the proposal from the town of Barre for emergency medical services. They proposed an up-front fee of \$25,000 to cover Wheelwright and the parts of Hardwick that border Barre. Quink said the proposal mentions additional costs but does not say an amount.

Quink said she is concerned about Ware’s ability to cover Hardwick, especially with overnight calls. Police Chief James Ayotte said they should continue talking with West Brookfield Rescue Squad and look at all options.

“The first and foremost concern is the residents of Hardwick,” Quink said. She also wants the town to get what they are paying for, she said. Quink proposed they ask Barre to come to their meeting and just discuss this. Quink said she will be approaching Ware with Ayotte or Lt. Kevin Landine, since they are the first responders for Hardwick. Kemp said she would arrange a meeting with Barre.

Water Resource Committee gives update

By Eileen Kennedy
Staff writer

WARE – Water Resources Committee Chairman Terrance Smith gave SelectBoard members an update Tuesday on the committee’s work so far.

They have had two meetings so far, one to organize the members and a second involving a trip to the Water Pumping Station on Barnes Street and the Wastewater Treatment Plant on Robbins Road.

Smith said the committee is not working on whether the town needs a Water Filtration Plant, which will come up for a vote on Monday, May 24, at Special Town Meeting, but long-term goals such as what other work has to be done to the water and wastewater systems.

He said the committee members got a tour of the pumping station and the town’s cistern located at the same location. He said the cistern water was very clear and despite being 22 feet deep, it was so clear it looked like five feet.

He said the siting of the Water Filtration Plant, should it be approved, would be where people park for Kubinski Field, which is a

baseball field adjacent to the pump station. He said since it would involve the town’s water system, the field should probably be closed. Smith said the land was set aside for water system purposes.

Smith said if the plant goes forward, additional work should be considered with it, such as rehabilitating the two water storage tanks, which is likely to cost between \$1.5 and \$2 million. They have not had any work on them since 1998, he said. The USDA, which would be the agency providing a grant if all goes well, could consider adding that work to the plant, he said.

Smith said the water is clean, as shown by the recent report on the town’s water, to which St. George-Sorel agreed. While iron and manganese have discolored the water, and in turn residents’ clothing while being washed, the water is safe to drink, he said.

The re-introduction of a DPW flushing plan for the town’s water pipes twice a year, has made a big improvement in the color of the water, he said.

St. George-Sorel said even if the filtration plant is built, it will still be necessary to use chlorine in the water.

Smith also pointed out that the wastewater treatment plant on Robbins Road will need to be rebuilt or replaced in the coming years as the Department of Environmental Protection changes standards. Ware’s plant was built in 1961, and then added to in the 1980s, and its replacement costs would be between \$50 and \$60 million.

Ware marketing

SelectBoard Vice Chairman John Morrin proposed the town stop using the slogan, “Ware, somewhere worth seeing.” He called it a placeholder and suggested the town return to using “Ware, the town that can’t be licked.”

“We survived that and now with Main Street it will never be more relevant,” said SelectBoard Chairman Keith Kruckas.

SelectBoard members agreed the Ware marketing could include more use of other verbs, such as hiking and shopping to better describe the town.

Appointments

Reappointed to terms that will expire on June 30, 2024 included:

Carolyn Wilkins, ADA Commission
Mark Swett, Conservation Commission
Carl Waal, Council on Aging
Lewis Iadarola, Zoning Board of Appeals
David Skoczylas, Zoning Board of Appeals, alternate member
Brandy Bruso, Community Development Authority
Danielle Souza, Community Development Authority
Resignations
The following resignations were accepted:
Janice Hills, Finance Committee
Paul Opalinski, Community Development Authority
Cynthia Allen Bourcier, Historical Commission

Vacancies

There are vacancies on the Finance Committee, the Community Development Authority, the Historical Commission and the Council on Aging. Anyone interested in serving on those boards should send a letter of interest to Town Manager Stuart Beckley at Ware Town Hall.

WARE ATM from page 1

Town counsel also recommended that voters approve an additional \$7.3 million to the \$6 million approved by Town Meeting voters several years ago for the project, according to Town Manager Stuart Beckley. Doing so would mean the previous vote of \$6 million would not have to be rescinded.

Unrelated articles

The SelectBoard has also recommended two other STM articles. One is to approve the spending of \$72,000 to fix drainage issues and make ball field repairs at Grenville Park. A grant for \$50,000 was received from the state and the town will spend about \$22,000 on the project.

The second article is to release an easement the town has at 127 Church St., which was originally from Sept. 7, 1938. It was taken to do some water system work that was never done, and will now revert to the homeowner.

Annual Town Meeting

There are 24 articles on the Annual Town Meeting warrant that range from annual financial housekeeping issues to restarting the Charter Commission so it can add amendments in and develop a detailed recall procedure for selectmen to purchasing a fire engine.

Two of the articles were dismissed during Tuesday’s SelectBoard meeting: the adoption of a new vacant/blighted property law that isn’t ready to be considered yet, and one to buy the

Department of Public Works a utility vehicle for cemetery work as the cost has been added to the DPW’s annual budget.

There is a consent agenda, which means if everyone agrees they can be voted on together, including articles one through eight. They cover items such as allowing the treasure/tax collector and SelectBoard members to authorize borrowing and to allow the town to accept grants.

Also on the warrant is the town’s fiscal 2022 budget, which is \$31,640,602, a 5% increase from fiscal 2021’s budget, which was \$30,130,214. It includes the School Department’s budget \$13.2 million, school transportation at \$1.8 million as well as Pathfinder Regional Schools’ assessment of \$1.11 million.

There are also articles to raise the number of marijuana retail businesses to 50% of the number of liquor stores, which would be more than the current 20% limit, and to accept a gift of a small piece of land on West Main Street. SelectBoard members agreed that the owners should pay for an assessment on the land to be sure it isn’t contaminated. The town would resell the parcel, according to Town Manager Stuart Beckley.

There is also a warrant article to buy a payload for the DPW for \$208,000, which would also include selling an older one for about \$25,000.

There is also an article for a \$625,000 fire engine, which is much needed by the Fire Department, Beckley said. Fire Chief Christopher Gagnon has prepared information for voters on the

need for the new engine, Beckley said.

There is also an article to design and install a section of water main and other associated works on Upper North Street to connect it with Greenwich Road. The cost is unknown at this time, but it would allow work at one end of Greenwich Road’s water lines to proceed without affecting the whole road. DPW Director Gilbert St. George-Sorel said four different water mains had broken on Greenwich Road lately, making it necessary to shut down all customers on the road while repairs were made.

Charter Commission article

The only article that saw a contentious discussion Tuesday was a citizens’ petition to recreate the Charter Commission, which was submitted by resident Terrance Smith and signed by at least 10 other voters.

Smith said he drafted the article so the Charter Commission could be revived to work for the next year on inserting all charter amendments into the body of the Town Charter so it is part of the document. The article also seeks to have the committee draft a simple, clearly-written piece to be added to the charter’s Article 3. It would outline how to recall SelectBoard members if they do not hold themselves to the same code of conduct and ethics to which other town employees are held, according to the petition.

SelectBoard Chairman Keith Kruckas said he didn’t think the

article was legal, and there are already laws in place to recall elected town officials. Kruckas said he believed it was aimed at him although Smith said it was not drafted to recall present SelectBoard members.

Smith did say he’s been watching meetings for the last three to four years, and hasn’t liked what he’s seen. “I’ve been embarrassed for our town,” he said about the behavior of some selectmen at town meetings including at a recent Special Town Meeting in March.

SelectBoard member John Morrin deemed the petition “a complete waste of time,” and said it would not pass the Attorney General’s review of a new law even if it was passed. The AG’s officer reviews all new town regulations passed at STMs and ATMs before they can be implemented.

Morrin also said Smith had not approached him or Kruckas to sign the petition despite saying he would ask all SelectBoard members to sign it. Smith said once he got enough signatures he turned it in to the town clerk’s office.

SelectBoard member Nancy Talbot said if the Charter Commission was recreated, the members would have to be elected and they would have to follow the same rules as candidates for other town positions. They would also be given two years to do their work before reporting back to voters. Talbot was on the original Charter Commission in 2007, and she is also the town clerk.

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The Ware River News will gladly correct factual errors that appear in this paper. Corrections or clarifications will always appear on Page 3. To request a correction, send information to ekennedy@turley.com, or call 967-3505. Corrections may also be requested in writing at: Ware River News, Attn: Editor, 80 Main St., Ware, MA 01082.

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HISTORY MATTERS

History Matters is a biweekly feature courtesy of The Grateful American Book Prize, which is given to children's books that emphasize the importance of American history.

May 16 to May 31

By John Grimaldi and David Bruce Smith

The Lincoln-Douglas debates pushed the possibility of a Lincoln presidency into inevitability. Positioned against Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois in a sequence of debates during re-election year, Douglas insisted the legality of slavery should be determined by the states and territories. Lincoln argued for its abolition.

Douglas kept his seat and Lincoln lost the argument, but his rhetoric raised his profile, and that of the unshaped Republican party.

Two years later, on May 18, 1860, Lincoln was the party's nominee for the presidential election. He faced off with Douglas; Southern Democrat John C. Breckinridge; and Constitutional Union candidate John Bell. Lincoln won 40% of the vote and became the first Republican President of the United States.

It was a victory that activated the secession of southern states, the creation of the Confederacy, and the Civil War.

The Grateful American Book Prize recommends "Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates that Defined America" by Allen C. Guelzo.

Spirit of St. Louis

At 7:52 in the morning of May 20, 1927, Charles Lindbergh, lifted off in his monoplane, "The Spirit of St. Louis", from Roosevelt Airfield in Long Island, New York in a win-it or- die-trying" 3,610-mile transatlantic bet. At first, getting airborne was difficult, he had a heavy fuel load, but eventually, he did.

Thirty-three and a half hours later, Lindbergh landed at Le Bourget Airfield, Paris; more than 100,000 people; droves of reporters, and correspondents, awaited the arrival of the first pilot, ever, to make a nonstop U.S. to Europe crossing. The news generated headlines around the world, about "Lucky Lindy" and "The Lone Eagle." In addition to the acclaim, Lindbergh earned a cash award for his feat, the equivalent of more than \$500,000 in today's currency.

The Grateful American Book Prize recommends "Lindbergh" by A. Scott Berg.

Brooklyn Bridge

Brooklyn was originally a separate city, bifurcated from New York City by the East River. Then, everything changed on May 24, 1883, when the Brooklyn Bridge opened; 250,000 people sauntered across it within 24 hours. It had taken 14 years for John A. Roebling, a German born industrial engineer, to construct what was then the world's largest and longest suspension structure.

According to History.com, "Roebling is credited with a major breakthrough in suspension-bridge technology: a web truss added to either side of the bridge roadway that greatly stabilized the structure." Until then, bridges of that type were notorious for their inability to deal with heavy winds and loads.

The Department of Transportation says today, 138 years later, more than 100,000 cars, 4,000 cyclists, and 10,000 pedestrians, cross daily.

The Grateful American Book Prize recommends David McCullough's "The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge."

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A dahlia fetish

While I always devote a portion of the vegetable garden to cut flower plots for the girls and I, last summer in particular we really got into picking big, beautiful bouquets for the house. One flower that did particularly well for us was the dahlia. I had four varieties total in varying sizes and color, and boy did these add a lot to the vase. I enjoyed harvesting them so much that I invested in a sampler pack from Old House Gardens mail order company, as well as another couple varieties from local growers. I can't wait to be surprised by what is in my sample pack.

Today was the designated day to plant them. I was a little nervous because the soil temperatures have only begun to warm up, but I had the time so I did it and will pray for the best. Sometimes you just have to do what you have to do! Read on to learn about this unique flower.

Dahlias are not hardy in our area. For that reason we wait until the danger of frost has passed to plant them. They can be started from seeds but most are grown from tubers of a named variety that was purchased from a nursery or mail order company. According to one source, there are some 50,000 named dahlia varieties! Flowers can vary in size from mignon singles that are a mere 2 inches across to AA size which grow over 10 inches wide.

Plant heights vary as well, ranging from six inches to 20 feet tall! Six different size flowers and 14 shapes are possible with colors that appear in nearly every shade except for true blue. Small varieties make especially good bedding plants, mixing well with other annual and perennial garden flowers. Large flowered types are suitable "specimen" plants that stand well on their own in nearly any gardening situation. All are great and long-lasting cut flowers.

Dahlias have the reputation of being "high maintenance," probably because they need to

be staked and pinched. They are also prone to insect and disease problems. None of this should dissuade you from growing them, however. Plant dahlias in full sun in fertile soil amended sparingly with compost and organic fertilizers. Most tubers are planted about three inches deep and one to three feet away from one another, depending on plant size. Providing enough air circulation between plants will help keep diseases at bay.

Most gardeners install a stake at planting time and attach the dahlia to it as it grows, beginning when it is a foot tall. Subsequent ties are made every 18 inches or so depending on variety. Without the use of stakes, large flowers will likely topple in the wind and rain, sometimes taking a good portion of the plant with it.

Pinching dahlias is another good practice. When the plant has three sets of leaves gently remove its growth tip. This will encourage more branching and inevitably more flowers. Once blooming starts, it is important to cut away spent blooms on a regular basis; tubers will grow stronger because of it. Dahlias thrive on sufficient moisture, especially since they are shallow rooted. Furnish them with one inch per week during active growth. As the growing season draws to a close, hold back on water and any supplemental fertilization you have been providing. This will give the tubers a chance to harden off before they are removed from the ground.

Dig up dahlia tubers either just prior to or soon after frost hits. Leave a small portion of stem attached to the tubers; it is a great place to adhere a label. Take it from me, it is easy to forget a name over the winter months! Soil should be eased off the tubers with a spray of water before placing in storage. Choose a location to overwinter your tubers that maintain 40 to 50 degrees temps and 90% humidity. These conditions will keep them dormant and healthy until it is time to replant. Many

people have good luck using a cold basement or root cellar; small quantities of tubers can be stored in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Placing tubers in damp peat moss, saw dust, shredded leaves or even ventilated plastic bags will help to prevent shriveling. Be sure to check on your tubers every couple of weeks throughout the offseason. Should you see shriveling, mist them with clean water and re-dampen the medium in which they were placed. If you see mold, bring down the temperature and humidity level.

Some dahlias like to get a jump-start on the season by prestarting dahlias indoors. We have done this occasionally at Old Sturbridge Village, and I am always amazed at just how fast the plants grow, and how quickly they outgrow their pots and become leggy. If you attempt it, four weeks prior to the last spring frost would be soon enough.

It's my hope that you will venture into the land of dahlia growing and love it as much as I do!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

ON THE GARDEN

Roberta McQuaid

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

There will be consequences to closing Mary Lane

I read about the information about Mary Lane closing from afar, but I grew up in Hardwick.

My mother, God rest her soul, had a heart attack and the nearest hospital was Mary Lane.

Hardwick Ambulance showed up with a basic EMT. I was an advanced EMT at the time and asked about the cardiac monitor of an IV. No one was qualified and I was not licensed in the commonwealth. Fortunately she survived to Ware before being med-flighted to Worcester.

I think \$133,000 is too much for Hardwick to pay for Ware to provide services. What are the costs going to be when the nearest emergency room is even farther away? And what are the life chances for an ambulance from another town to respond to someone living on Gaudet Road and getting to a hospital? Will it be an equipped ALS ambulance? Will it get there in time?

The ramifications of Baystate closing Mary Lane are serious.

Leonard Campbell, Meredith, New Hampshire

Thanks to the community

On behalf of the Board of Directors for Wishing Well Charities Inc., we would like to thank all the local businesses and individuals who helped make our first fundraising raffle such a huge success. It is only with the help and support of our community that this fledgling charity will be able to succeed in providing the assistance we want by granting small wishes to those in need who want to celebrate life's everyday moments.

Thank you so much to everyone who bought raffle tickets, thank you to Hanna Devine's for hosting us on the night of our drawing, and thank you to the following businesses who donated gift cards, gift certificates and gift baskets: Hanna Devine's, McCarthy's Pub, Janine's Frostee, Pig Park BBQ, Teresa's restaurant, Salem Cross, Mexicali, The Grapevine Grille and Changes Hair Design. Your generosity is so very much appreciated. Stay tuned as we will be announcing our Father's Day raffle soon. It is sure to generate some excitement.

Belinda and Chris Midura, co-founders, Wishing Well Charities Inc., Ware

Editor's note: This letter is being re-run to reflect the fact that the Ware School Committee and School Superintendent also signed it.

Violence will not be tolerated

Over this past weekend (May 8), an alarming act of violence and cowardice toward an innocent disabled resident occurred in Grenville Park. Thankfully, the Police Department has identified the responsible parties, and has begun the process of bringing justice to the affected family.

The Parks Commission has banned those involved from the Parks' properties. To restore respect for people and the facilities, the Commission will close the basketball courts for 30 days. The Police Department and Parks Commission will increase patrols and the use of cameras to assure safety. There will be zero tolerance for these wrongful, hurtful acts. This response is a community responsibility. If you see something, say something.

This act is not what Ware is about.

Grenville Park and all areas of the town are to be safe and open to all. Ware is a community where we care and watch out for everyone. We are all neighbors. We need to respect each other, no matter any differences. It is not acceptable in any terms in this town to be fearful, to feel unsafe, to be attacked. We as a town will do better. We have to. Treating citizens poorly - any and all citizens - will not be tolerated.

Be thankful tonight for a Police Department that acted quickly and professionally to address this terrible crime. Be concerned that this act happened. Be thoughtful about how we can together make the town better for all.

The town, through its leaders and staff, will work hard to continue to ensure that Ware is a safe, inclusive and caring community. Be safe.

Ware SelectBoard,
Ware Parks Commission,
Police Chief Shawn Crevier,
Town Manager Stuart Beckley,
School Superintendent
Dr. Marlene DiLeo,
Ware School Committee

WARE RIVER NEWS

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Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length, and "Your Turn" guest column between 500-800 words. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require that the person submitting the opinion also include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, or defamation of character.

Send opinions to:
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Letter to the Editor
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The deadline for submissions is Monday at noon.

2021Turley Election Policy

This newspaper will print free self-submitted statements of candidacy only four weeks or more out from the election. All candidates running in both contested and uncontested races are asked to submit their statements to the editor to include only biographical and campaign platform details. Total word count for statements is limited to between 300-500 words maximum. Please include a photo. We will not publish any statements of candidacy inside the four weeks from election threshold. To publish any other campaign publicity during the race, please contact our advertising representatives. We also do not allow personal attacks against other candidates or political parties in statements of candidacy, nor do we publish for free any information about key endorsements or political fundraisers.

Letters to the editor of no more than 250 words from supporters endorsing specific candidates or discussing campaign issues are limited to three total per author during the election season. No election letters will appear in the final edition before the election. We reserve the right to edit all statements of candidacy and letters to the editor to meet our guidelines.

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EQLT to host pollinator plant fact walk

NORTH BROOKFIELD – East Quabbin Land Trust installed a pollinator plant fact walk at Wendemuth Meadow, 25 Bates St., from May through July.

Participants will learn about the pollinator plants in the area as they walk along the beautiful trails at Wendemuth Meadow. Each month, plants in the fact walk will be rotated out to include different species that are blooming in the area. People may test their newfound knowledge with an identification quiz at the end of the fact walk. They made download the trail map at EQLT.org.

ASSAULT from page 1

ways, but Shiloh, who is autistic, has regressed. “He’s changed,” Skerritt said. “He is making a lot of ticks, sounds and actions, like hitting his hands together, again. Now it’s a lot worse.” He said his son had gotten past a lot of those behaviors in the past, but the attack brought them back.

Shiloh’s psychologist and other service providers have jumped in and are working to help him in the wake of the attack. “They’ve been great,” he said.

Skerritt said the town’s response, from residents to town officials, has impressed him. “I can’t even tell you how nice that has been,” he said. Town officials, including Town Manager Stuart Beckley, the Parks Department and selectmen, have all shared their sincere sympathies that it happened and want to help, he said.

This week Shiloh has an appointment for a orthopedic surgeon who will assess his broken shoulder blade and what should be done. Skerritt said it is problematic because Shiloh is not verbal about his pain, and it sometimes difficult to figure out there is a problem. Shiloh had shingles, which can be a very painful problem, for three days before Skerritt figured out there was an issue.

In the meantime, Shiloh has kept up his walks in the park, accompanied by his dad, a couple of times a day. Skerritt, a VanPool drive in Framingham, tries to make it back to Ware between his morning and afternoon shifts, but can’t always do so.

“It’s a little tough sometimes, he’s six feet tall and I’m 5’7,” he said. “He’s got really long legs and he goes like 100 mph. I told him you have to slow down a little.”

Skerritt said Shiloh started life without any issues, reading books very early on with plenty of talking until he developed type 1 diabetes, even going into a diabetic coma as a toddler. After the diabetes began, he said, Shiloh began losing a number of skills.

“He’s so smart,” Skerritt said. “If people could spend even an hour with him they would understand. They would see that he is polite and kind.” Shiloh makes dinner for them every day, and won’t even let Skerritt do the dishes, he said.

Town Manager Stuart Beckley and the Parks Department are considering holding a Shiloh’s Walk in Grenville Park, Skerritt said, which he thinks would be a fitting tribute to his son.

Staff writer Eileen Kennedy contributed to this report.

LETTER from page 1

sign the letter. Desjardins said he wanted to bring it up for a School Committee vote, although he was tempted to tell Beckley to put the committee’s as a signatory. Desjardins read the letter to the committee before the vote was taken. “I think it’s important to have us on there,” he said.

“The School Committee should be included as the schools need to be in the forefront of this given the fact the aggressiveness of the attack and the fact that the attackers were within the k-12 age group,” said School Committee member Aaron Sawabi.

Sawabi said signing the letter was important. “We should stand behind the SelectBoard, the Recreation Commission and the Town Manager because we represent our kids and the community,” he said. “We see it, we’re saddened by it, we’re horrified by it. We want change and we want to make sure this doesn’t happen again.”

Culturally responsive practices

Director of Student Services Jessica Bolduc told the School Committee about a grant to help the school district review its current curriculum and adopt culturally responsive practices if necessary. She and 11 other school staff are working with a consultant, Black Print Educational Consulting, to assess the curriculum and develop strategies for racial equity within the district, she said.

It’s multi-year initiative, she said, with participants working to develop a plan to increase stakeholder engagement about culturally responsive curriculum. The stakeholders include students and staff.

Data is being gathered about the curriculum, and stakeholders are being engaged by the group, she said. Then strategies for racial equity and culturally responsiveness in the curriculum will be developed, she said, which is a multi-year process.

She said she would keep the committee informed and any proposed changes would come before them. Bolduc said the goals include increasing the engagement of students, staff and families with the curriculum. “We want students to feel connected to the curriculum and when that happens, academic achievement increases,” she said.

Part of the work includes staff discovering whether they have a conscious or unconscious bias, which is helpful to bring to light, she said.

Bolduc pointed out that the demography of Ware schools has changed over the last 10 to 20 years, with fewer Caucasian students and more Hispanic students. According to Department of Education reports, she said, in 2000 the town was 94.5% white, 2.6% Hispanic, 1.4% African American, .4% Asian and .5% Native American. In 2010, the town was 90.5% white, 4.7% Hispanic, 2.3% African American, .6% Asian and .2% Native American. In 2021, it is 86.1% white, 7.8% Hispanic, 1.5% African American, .4% Asian and .2% Native American.

Sawabi said it was a great initiative and he was glad there were checkpoints along the way. He said he looked forward to the committee being kept apprised of the work. Bolduc also invited committee members to attend some of the group’s meetings.

DAFFODILS from page 1

Debros and his wife, Jane, moved to their 20-plus acre farm on Upper Church Street in 1976, using it as a weekend getaway from his job as an anesthesiologist at Mass General Hospital in Boston. The couple eventually made it their permanent home, raising animals and adding to the gardens that surround the property. Descendants of the farm’s past residents still stop by to visit during the Hardwick Community Fair, reminiscing on childhood days spent playing hide and seek and exploring the outdoors.

What began decades ago with a single pot of daffodils, has now turned into a town-wide project to add color and beauty, while inspiring community involvement. The daffodils, which bloom in the spring, are now going dormant, but will return year after year to usher in the warmth and sunshine. Debros divides and replants the bulbs between April and May, when the ground is soft and moist. Using a crowbar, Debros drives a hole into the ground, creating a deep, wide area to plant the bulb. Debros said he and his wife can plant 1,000 bulbs in an hour using this technique.

Daffodils use their leaves to store energy for the next year’s flowers, and they should not be cut or mowed until they have turned from green to yellow. This change in color indicates that the bulb is being built below ground. Daffodils also require moisture and will thrive and multiply with a thick layer of mulch. Debros said moisture is especially important during the drier months of July and

August. The first-year blooms on a daffodil are generally small and will get bigger each year, he said.

While most people assume the stunning flowers should not be picked, Debros says it is actually the opposite. He encourages people to pick the daffodils, as it helps the plant produce more flowers. “The more you pick, the more they grow,” Debros said. He hopes to install signage encouraging daffodil picking.

Debros has also planted snowdrops, which naturally deter moles and other mammals from destroying bulbs. He said snowdrops contain galantamine, which has been used to treat a range of medical conditions, such as Alzheimer’s disease, and it is known to cause gastrointestinal distress when ingested. Debros said planting snowdrops near crocus and other plants found irresistible to hungry critters, will protect them. He said his snowdrops begin blooming on Christmas Eve every year.

“The idea that we can improve on our town roads...we don’t want to live in neighborhoods with a ‘broken window’,” Debros said, referring to an article written by political scientist and Harvard University professor James Q. Wilson and Harvard Kennedy School fellow George Kelling, published in 1982. Wilson and Kelling wrote, “One unrepaired broken window is a signal no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing.”

Debros hopes his beautification of Hardwick’s roadways will inspire more people to join him.

“The whole thing is just my hobby, a spectacular spring plantation for everybody to enjoy,” Debros said.



Fred Debros is shown with his cows, Socks and Ida, and donkeys Blitz and Donner.



Jane Debros gets a warm greeting from Socks, a cow she raised by hand.

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Photo by Melina Bourdeau
(From right to left) Colton Hudon, Joseph Kwasniewski, Jacob Tower, Domonic Butryn and Colby Hudon were students that worked on a recent Belchertown Fire Department vehicle. Richard Eckhart and Thomas Kokoski also worked on the project.

Students help give vehicle new life

By Melina Bourdeau
Staff writer

PALMER – From one department’s vehicle to another, Pathfinder Regional Technical High School students were able to transform a Ford Explorer from a police vehicle to one of the newest additions to the Belchertown Fire Department’s fleet.

Belchertown Fire Captain Robert VanZandt, who is also a graduate from Pathfinder, said this one of several vehicles the department has had worked on by the automotive students.

“We’re using the vehicle for administrative uses, training, and some emergency response,” said VanZandt.

Rather than purchasing a new vehicle, the department purchased the vehicle for its trade-in value from the police department.

Students repaired rust, installed rear seats, painted the vehicle and other repairs to the 2014 Ford Explorer. Pathfinder automotive teacher Craig Sankey said the students get the opportunity to give back to their communities.

“Our towns are responsible for our budgets, and we want to give back to them. It’s important for students to get this hands on learning experience, too,” he said. “This year with COVID, it’s

make the timing (of the project) tough, but we persevered. It’s been good to be in the shop for the year...This is one of the bigger projects.”

He said while the program can’t guarantee a project will be done immediately, they can make sure it’s done well.

“We make sure there is a quality product that is going to reflect the professionalism and industry standard,” Sankey said. “They’re proud of what they do and we strive to be that way. Anyone can teach shortcuts, but we teach the way that quality work should be done.”

He estimated the project took about 50 to 60 hours to complete by a group of about eight students.

Pathfinder students Colby Kokosa and Colton Hudon were among the students who worked on the project, which they deemed “stressful.”

“One of the things that was stressful was having the time to get this done,” said Hudon. “My sophomore year we worked on a Belchertown police vehicle, so this wasn’t my first time working on a project like this.”

His classmate echoed his point. “I’m from Belchertown, so I know this is something I’m going to see every day,” said Kokosa. “I’m glad it was done in time.”

Tri-Parish church to hold plant sale and more, June 5

HARDWICK The Tri-Parish Community Church has started planning for its 15th annual plant and bake sale. The third annual tag and craft sale will coincide with this event, which will take place on the Hardwick Common, Saturday, June 5 and Sunday, June 6, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day.

This East Quabbin area springtime event will feature traditional, favorite and connoisseur perennials plus selected annuals, heirloom vegetable plants, and herbs. Inishoven Farms, of North Brookfield, Stillman’s Farm, of New Braintree, Chicken Feather Farm, of

New Braintree, and private gardens will provide plants. Assorted home-baked desserts and breads will also be sold. The event is held rain or shine. Volunteers and attendees must wear masks and maintain six-foot distancing; hand sanitizer will be available.

Tri-Parish seeks vendors for the tag and craft sale on that date. Spaces will be offered for \$30 each. Applications may be obtained by contacting the church at triparishcc@gmail.com or Tri-Parish Community Church, P.O. Box 202, New Braintree, MA 01531. People should reserve a space early. All are welcome.

DA Early gives funding to QRMHS for safe post-graduation celebration



Turley Publications courtesy photo
Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr., to the left of Quaboag Regional Middle High School Principal Stephen Duff, who is at far right in the middle row. QRMHS students stand with him.

WARREN – Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. awarded Quaboag Regional High School with a grant to support fun and safe post-graduation activities for students.

This year, Early’s office awarded 16 different schools across Worcester County nearly \$20,000 in grants to support programming that helps keep students from drinking and driving after celebratory events like prom

and graduation.

“Students have been dealing with a lot in the last year with the COVID-19 pandemic causing them to miss out on time in school, playing sports and enjoying social activities with friends and family,” Early said. “I am particularly proud this year to be able to help provide these kids with the fun celebrations they deserve to end the school year safely.”

Early and his Community

Outreach Team also offer presentations for teens to promote safety, including on the topics of the dangers of mixing drugs and alcohol, social host liability awareness for parents and distracted driving.

“The hardest part of our job is talking to people in pain. Life can change in the blink of an eye. These programs that our community partners have created help to keep kids safe from unnecessary tragedies caused by combining

these celebrations with drinking and driving,” Mr. Early said.

The funding for these grants Early is providing to high schools across the county is made possible through the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance Drunk Driving Trust Fund, which is a state grant that provides support services and advocacy to victims, witnesses and their family members of drunk and drugged driving crashes.

What is the best time to claim Social Security?

By Russell Gloor
Guest columnist

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Dear Rusty: I will be 64 in May of this year, and I’d like to know the best time to claim Social Security. *Signed: Anxious to Retire*

Dear Anxious: First, please understand that there is no one “best time” to claim your Social Security benefit, because when you should claim depends upon several factors, such as:

- Your current health
- Your life expectancy
- Your immediate financial need
- Whether you are married
- Whether you are still working

When you should claim also depends upon your personal benefit goals. For example, if you wish to maximize your

monthly Social Security benefit amount, you can best do that by simply waiting until age 70 to claim. For each full year you delay past your full retirement age (FRA), your Social Security benefit will grow by 8%, up to age 70 when you get the maximum you’re entitled to. If you are married and die first, that will also provide your widow with a higher benefit as your survivor if your wife’s own benefit is less than yours. But waiting until age 70 to maximize isn’t for everyone.

If you are in poor health and don’t expect to enjoy at least average longevity (about 84 for a man your age now), then claiming earlier would be prudent. But claiming earlier also means a smaller benefit.

Your full retirement age (FRA) is when you get 100% of the benefit you’ve earned from a lifetime of working. Your FRA is 66 ½ and if you wait longer than that you will earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) of .667% for each full month you delay. That means that if you delay until 70, your Social Security benefit will be 28% more than it would be at your FRA. But if you claim before you have reached your FRA, your benefit amount will be permanently reduced by .556% for each full month earlier than your FRA that you claim. If, for example, you claim your Social Security to start at age 64, your benefit will be cut by about 17% from what you’d get by waiting until your FRA to

claim. And, if you are married, that smaller benefit is what your widow’s survivor benefit would be based upon if you die first.

Anytime Social Security benefits are claimed before you have reached your full retirement age, you are subject to Social Security’s “earnings test” which, if you are working, limits how much you can earn before Social Security takes back some of your benefits. For 2021, the annual earnings limit is \$18,960, and if that is exceeded, they will take back benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit. The earnings test applies until you reach your FRA, after which there is no longer a limit to how much you can earn. In your specific situation, if you were to claim for your benefits to start

Please see **SSI**, page 9

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GIBBS from page 1

it was too expensive to do the entire thing,” said Rebekah Cornell, Director of Planning and Community Development. “This is the worst section of the trail...it’s really unpassable most of the year,” she said, explaining why they decided to focus their efforts on this part of the trail. Improving this end of the trail also creates accessible access by wheel or foot, to the popular shopping plaza.

Improvements to this section of trail include drainage, as the trail is either under water or muddy for a good portion of the year, making wheelchair or stroller use impossible. Grading and pitch will also be adjusted to improve wheel access. The surface will be “completely hard-packed stone dust, similar to the upper portion of the Mass Central Rail Trail maintained by East Quabbin Land Trust on Church Street,” Cornell said. Included in this project is improvement to the trail at Malboeuf Road. “One side of the trail is very steep and not accessible for wheelchair or stroller. Improving the grading and pitch there will improve

the accessibility,” Cornell said. Privacy fencing will be installed by Precision Fence Company Inc.

The Gibbs Crossing trail access includes ample parking, making it an ideal spot to people of all ages and abilities to meet up and utilize the trail. A curb cut, crosswalk, and new signage will also be added. “This is an easy spot to go with family and friends exploring and out into nature,” Cornell said. Cornell said these improvements could be especially significant for Ware’s growing senior population. “These improvements at Gibbs Crossing will really be beneficial to the community. A trail

like this can be universal for all ages and abilities,” she said.

Helping to make this project possible was a generous grant from the Edward and Barbara Urban Foundation. The Urbans founded American Athletic Shoe Co. Inc. in 1959 on South Street in Ware, well-known to this day for their ice skates. The foundation was created to promote the quality of life for the residents of the Ware community. Urban’s nephew, Paul Opalinski, and his wife, Tracy, now oversee the business and the foundation. Paul Opalinski can often be seen mowing and maintaining the Rail Trail, making sure it will be enjoyed by all.

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Buffone captures first win of season

WINCHESTER, N.H. – Ricky Whipple romped to victory in the 57-lap John Zellman Memorial Pure Stock feature Saturday, May 8, at Monadnock Speedway, however in post-race inspection, Davis was awarded the win.

Cam Curtis flexed his muscles to top the Late Model Sportsman main, with Chris Buffone taking no prisoners en route to the Street Stock victory.

Mini Stock ace Gordon Farmum earned his first victory lap of the season Saturday, while Six Shooter powerhouse Dustin Thibodeau's first career outing on the high banks netted him the win, and Jake Bosse was victorious for the second week in a row in the Young Guns.

Pure Stock powerhouses Chris Davis and Kodi Sabins led the 21-car field to begin the 57-lapper, which would sail by in breakneck fashion, as all 57-circuits around the high banks were run without cautions. Davis was the man on the point for the first 23 go-rounds.

But while Davis was fast, Ricky Whipple was on a rail. Dropping Davis to second on lap 24, he then sped away and hid. Sabins, a distant second with the white flag in the air, suddenly coasted to a stop in the infield, handing the runner-up spot back to Davis, with former Modsman Joey Jarvis completing his charge from row five to finish third. (in post-race inspection the official top three were Chris Davies, Joey Jarvis and JD Stockwell).

Robert Hagar led early and often in the LMS 25-lapper but, on this night, teen star Cam

Please see **RACES**, page 8



Matt Foran gets the serve off.



Indians fall in sweep

WARE – Last Wednesday afternoon, the Indians boys volleyball team suffered its first loss of the season, a 3-0 sweep against Southwick. The Indians fell 25-11, 27-25, and 25-19. Ware is now 2-1 this season.

Photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Jack Tweedie makes a quick set over the net.



Doug Mulligan sends a set toward the net.



Myles McGrail reacts to a serve with a bump.



Mike Polak goes for the spike.

Santaniello makes impact in Mutiny's return

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Most college students will usually chill out for the rest of the day after taking a final exam.

That's not exactly what Laura Gouvin, who lives in Monson, did after taking a Spanish final at Boston College last Saturday afternoon.

After finishing the last exam of her freshman year, Gouvin drove about 80 miles west on the Mass. Pike. She arrived at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow about ten minutes prior to the start of the New England Mutiny's season opening match versus the Boston Scorpions S.C., who are first-year member of the United Women's Soccer League.

The Scorpions stunned the Mutiny by scoring a pair of goals during the first ten minutes and they held onto the lead for the next 65 minutes.

Gouvin, who's a midfielder, assisted on the Mutiny's first goal of the season which was scored by Agawam native Hope Santaniello, who's a forward, during the 76th minute.

A minute later, Melina Couzis, who was a senior defender on the UConn women's soccer team this past spring, netted the equalizer for the Mutiny and the match ended in a 2-2 draw.

"Even though I only played a couple of games for the Mutiny in 2019, I really love being a member of this soccer club," said Gouvin. "This stadium is very close to my hometown and I'm really looking forward to playing a full season with the Mutiny this year."

Gouvin and several of her teammates have never lost a regular season match while wearing

Please see **MUTINY**, page 8



Max Sanderson starts a rush toward the Granby goal.



Eathan Farrar takes a shot on goal.



Cody Ferus shoots ahead of defensive pressure.

Pioneers edge by Rams

PALMER – Last Friday afternoon, Eathan Farrar's three goals paced Pathfinder to a narrow 4-3 win over visiting Granby. Cody Ferus also scored and Nick Beaulieu had three assists. The Pioneers are 1-2 to start the season.

QUABBIN FALLS IN SLUGFEST

BARRE – Clinton started with eight runs in the first inning, and the Panthers couldn't catch all the way up in a 14-11 loss last Wednesday afternoon at Quabbin Regional High School. Rebecca Saarinen had three hits and two RBI for Quabbin.



Meaghan Doyle slides safely into third base.



Jordan Blanchard tries to frame a pitch.



Photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Pitcher Kacey McCreadie pitches in the first inning.



Grace Talbot makes contact.



Brynn Adams fires a throw back to the infield.



Sydney Giorgi fields a grounder to short.

community

Monson Savings Bank donates \$1,000 to prom

MONSON – Monson Savings Bank is all about supporting the local communities and is frequently seen throughout the local communities showing their dedication in various ways. Most recently, Monson Savings Bank President and CEO Dan Moriarty and East Longmeadow Branch Manager Aimee Kohn, met at the East Longmeadow Branch to present high school senior Brianna Conant, with a \$1,000 donation to support East Longmeadow High School’s Senior Prom.

With all of the hardships that the pandemic has presented in the past year and a half, the ELHS Parent Group wanted to make sure that students did not miss out on their prom, a highlight of senior year. They also wanted it to be a stress-free experience for the Class of 2021, so the ELHS Parent Group sought donations from East Longmeadow businesses to offset the cost of prom for this year’s senior class. The donations are being used to lower the price of prom tickets and other senior year expenses.

“We are pleased to support the East Longmeadow High School senior prom this year,” said



Left to right are Aimee Kohn, Monson Savings Bank East Longmeadow branch manager; Brianna Conant, East Longmeadow High School senior; Dan Moriarty, Monson Savings Bank president and CEO.

Moriarty. “It has been a difficult year for everyone, I am happy to know that the seniors are being

this special night.”

Since most proms were canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic, ELHS Class of 2021 is very excited and grateful to have a prom this year. The students have been busy planning their prom for the past few months. The anticipated event is scheduled for Thursday, June 3, at The Log Cabin.

“We are all so happy we are able to have our prom,” said Brianna Conant, ELHS Senior. “We were not sure if it going to be possible at first but we are so grateful to Monson Savings Bank and other local businesses who helped to make this a reality for us.”

Kohn said her own memories of prom were important to her and, as the manager of the new East Longmeadow branch, she is happy to support the local community.

“I had such a fun time at my prom and I am so happy to see that, even though this year has thrown so many obstacles in their way, the East Longmeadow High School Seniors can attend their prom and make memories that will stay with them forever,” said Kohn. “I love supporting East Longmeadow and all of our communities so this is really exciting.”

Monson nonprofit offering family travel grants

MONSON – Now that travel is making a comeback, many families are busy planning their next big adventure. Unfortunately, for those constrained by financial or other limitations, the dream may seem impossible.

“This past year has wreaked havoc on so many families,” says Amanda Renna, Founder & CEO at Travelnitch. “But let’s be honest, even pre-COVID, travel is a luxury that many cannot afford.” Travelnitch is working to change this, according to Renna. The nonprofit organization, based in Western Massachusetts, is committed to making the travel lifestyle more accessible for those who feel it’s out of reach. While Travelnitch is focused on virtual travel as a way of inspiring little explorers, Renna feels strongly that there is no substitute for the real thing.

“Travel is an opportunity for families to learn and grow together. It teaches kids adaptability and introduces them to people and places different from what they are accustomed to. Travel can be a really powerful

tool for raising strong and compassionate kids,” Renna said. To make travel a more attainable goal for all families Travelnitch is now offering Family Travel Grants. Income-eligible households can apply for financial assistance to cover the cost of virtual tours, cultural excursions, and family daycations. The program is currently funded through generous support from individual donors, many of whom are avid travelers themselves. “People who share our passion for travel understand its value, and they want to share that experience with the next generation.” Renna hopes to raise even more money to provide weekend getaway grants as well. To learn more about Travelnitch or to apply for a Family Travel Grant, visit travelnitch.org/grants. We also ask that you consider a gift to support this and other meaningful programs that inspire kids at home and beyond. Donations can be made online at travelnitch.org/donate or by mailing a check to Travelnitch, P.O. Box 284, Monson, MA 01057.

MUTINY from page 7

a Mutiny uniform. The last time they suffered a regular season loss was during 2018 season. The Mutiny played their home matches at several different fields that season before moving into Lusitano Stadium at the start of the 2019 campaign.

“This stadium is the best home field in our entire league,” said second-year Mutiny head coach Jeb Booth. “No other team has the same type of soccer culture that we do here. It’s a little disappointing that the concession building wasn’t open yet because we can’t socialize with the players and their families following the match. It’s all about the relationship with me.”

The Mutiny finished the 2019 regular season with an 8-0-2 mark before falling to the Lancaster Inferno in the U.W.S. Eastern Conference Finals. The Mutiny players waited more than 670 days before playing another match because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Booth wasn’t very concerned after watching his team fall behind by two goals early in the match.

“I always believe that we will win every match,” said Booth, who also coaches the Fitchburg State University women’s soccer team. “I believe in them as a team and as players, so I don’t get nervous about things very often.”

The Scorpions are coached by Evan Burokas, who was a member



Ludlow’s Ela Kopec kicks the ball away.

of the Western Mass. Pioneers from 2012-2019. He also played for the Western Mass Professional team in 2015.

“None of my players had ever played a soccer match at this stadium before tonight,” Burokas said. “I told them what this stadium represents to the community and what it means to play here. It was very special for me to have my team here for the first time. We did take an early 2-0 lead, but we knew it was going to be a tough game. They just kept pressing us.”

There are a couple of other connections between the Scorpions and the Mutiny.

Booth has coached several of the Scorpions ENCL regional teams for more than ten years.

Lauren Berman, who’s currently a Mutiny midfielder, played for the Scorpions youth teams from U-8 to U-18. Just like Gouvin, Berman played college soccer at Boston College. She also played for a professional soccer club in Hungary for two seasons and is currently the soccer operations coordinator

for the women’s soccer team at Harvard University.

The Scorpions took a 1-0 lead when forward Kristi Vierra lofted a shot from the left side of the box into the upper right corner over the head of Mutiny goalkeeper Caitlin Murphy.

Then forward Meg Hughes scored a breakaway goal giving the Scorpions a 2-0 advantage seven minutes into the season opener.

Another Monson resident listed on this year’s Mutiny roster is midfielder Lily Fabian, who’s a first-year member of the team. Fabian, who plays college soccer at UMass-Lowell, took the Mutiny’s first shot on goal that was saved by Scorpion’s goalie Kayla Thompson, who was replaced at the start of the second half by Skylar Kuzmich.

The Mutiny also changed goalies during the second half.

Ela Kopec, who was starting goalie for the Ludlow girls’ varsity soccer team last fall, replaced Murphy.

During the 76th minute, Santaniello, who’ll be a member of the U.R.I. women’s soccer team in the fall, received a pass from Gouvin and put a shot into the net.

“I saw that Laura had the ball, but I didn’t really know if she was going to make a pass or take a shot,” Santaniello said. “She made the pass to me and I just poked it into the net with my toe. It felt great after scoring that goal.”

After stealing a pass from a defender, Couzis scored the tying




Lauren Berman looks to switch up her feet.



Photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Hope Santaniello, of Agawam, scored in the season opener for the Mutiny.

The other local players listed on the Mutiny gameday roster were Trystin Burger (Granby), Jocelyn Trajkovski (Ludlow), and Lydia Kinsman (Southwick).

The Mutiny will be looking to celebrate their first victory of the season when they host the Connecticut Rush at 7p.m. on Saturday night.



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2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

The Belchertown Public School District is now accepting applications for the following School Choice openings for the 2021-2022 school year:

Grade K	8	Grade 6	1
Grade 2	4	Grade 7	10
Grade 3	4	Grade 8	10
Grade 4	1	Grade 9	12
Grade 5	4	Grade 10	12

The Belchertown Public Schools combine innovation and tradition to provide positive educational experiences for all of our students through quality programs, dynamic teaching and healthy relationships.

The deadline for submitting a **complete** application packet which includes all required documents is 4:00 p.m. on **Friday, June 25, 2021.**

The selection of non-resident students for admission will be in the form of a random drawing when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces. There will be two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place on June 25, 2021, and in the event of unexpected additional openings, a second drawing will be conducted on August 13, 2021.

The application and guidelines can be downloaded at www.belchertownps.org or picked up at 14 Maple St., Belchertown, MA 01007.

The Belchertown School District does not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation or ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need, academic performance, disability or proficiency in the English language in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

RACE from page 7

Curtis had the hot hand. Curtis dropped Hagar to second on lap 18 and pulled away.

Hagar finished strong, though, sailing to the runner-up finish ahead of the Bay State Curtis twins, Chase and Jaret. Cole Littlewood was fifth.

Chris Buffone, who’d struggled on opening night, put all his ills behind him Saturday. Starting up front, he led all the way in the 25-lap Street Stock feature to finish well ahead of strong and steady runner-up Nathan Wenzel.

Alstead, N.H. hot shoe Rupert Murdoch came home third, just ahead of Hillary Renaud and Tim Wenzel. Opening night winner Tommy O’Sullivan – Buffone’s uncle – took the night off.

In the Mini Stocks, it was four-holer star Gordon Farnum leading all the way. Opening night winner Ray King kept Farnum in sight but had no answer for the Fitzwilliam hot shoe. Kevin Cormier came home third, just ahead of Louie Maher and division rookie Mike Douglas.

Travis Hollis led the first 21 laps of the Six Shooter main, but Claremont kingpin Dustin Thibodeau, in his first-ever Monadnock run, used the high groove to finally take control and top the division’s first feature race of the season. It was Thibodeau’s second victory of the weekend.

Hollis was strong in second, with Brandon Mailhot steady for



Submitted photo
Chris Buffone, of Belchertown, picked up a win in the 25-lap Street Stock event May 8 at Monadnock Speedway.

third. Hollis and Mailhot were the earlier qualifying race winners.

Jake Bosse made it two in a row in the novice Young Guns. Fast Eddie Petruskevicius earned the runner-up hardware, with Jeff Moffat third. Leilei Daniels won Saturday’s Young Gun heat race.

Monadnock Speedway will return to action next Saturday, May 15, with a full card of NHSTRA racing, featuring the mighty Modifieds’ third outing of the season. For more information, please visit www.monadnockspeedway.com.

Monadnock Speedway May 8 results:
Street Stocks: Christopher Buffone, Nathan Wenzel, Young Guns: Jake Bosse, Edward Petruskevicius, Jeffrey Moffat Jr, Leilei Daniels, Aaliyah Tacy
Six Shooters: Dustin Thibodeau, Travis Hollins, Brandon Mailhot, Chris Hadley, Micheal Yeaton, Bucky Thibodeau, Maxwell Chaput, Jeremy Blood, Chooch Snidel, Paul Colburn, John Thibodeau
Pure Stocks: Chris Davis, Joseph Jarvis, JD Stockwell, Jason LeRay, David Stone Jr, Kodi Sabins, Jake Bosse, Ken LaFont, Cory Lofland, Damien Houle, James Zellman Sr, Brittany Patnode, Brianna Patnode, Ryan Lawliss, James Zellman, Kyle Robinson Newell, Nicholas Houle, Chris Higbee, Carter Chamberlin, William Graham

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